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Thesis

THE MUSIC OF ISRAEL AS REFLECTED IN THE PSALTER

Submitted by

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(A.B., University of Michigan, 1927
B.Mus., University of Michigan, 1928)

In partial fulfilment of requirements for

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SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose and scope of the thesis

This thesis is an attempt to discover, through a careful perusal of the text of the Psalter, evidences of the musical life in Israel.

It will include descriptions of the instruments mentioned in the Psalms, and their use. The character of the vocal music, the organization of choirs and the style of singing will be outlined as far as possible. The titles will be analyzed as to their significance in indicating the place of the Psalms in the ritual and liturgy of the Temple. Definitions will be given of those phrases which bear on the musical performance or ritualistic usage of the Psalms.

The deductions regarding the music of Israel will be drawn from the text of the Psalter itself, titles, directions for the use of the Psalms, and incidental references to instruments, choirs, ritual or liturgy. The inherent song and poetic structure of the Psalms, since this forms the background for their musical interpretation, will be discussed.

The title of the Psalter

The Psalter belongs to the third division of the Hebrew Canon, the Writings. The Jewish church arranged the canonical books under the headings the Law, the Prophets and the Writings. The Septuagint translators employed the word psalm to render the Hebrew word mizmor, which was the most frequent sub-title. Mizmor indicates a song to be sung to musical accompaniment, probably of stringed instruments. In the Hebrew Bible the Psalter bears the title Tehillim (praises), though only one of the Psalms is so designated (Psalm 145). Tehillim has the meaning of sacrificial praise song, therefore the Hebrew title of the collection is translatable as Book of Praises, or simply Praises, since Sepher Tehillim is abbreviated into Tillim or Tillin. Another title, apparently of an early collection of Davidic Psalms was Tephilloth or Prayers. The Septuagint uses the designation Psalmoi, which is the plural of a term meaning "a touching sharply," "a pulling or twanging with the fingers." This title thus corresponds with the term mizmor, or melody, which is used in the Old Testament only to designate religious songs. In the Codex Alexandrinus is found the heading Psalterion, whence comes the word Psalter - meaning here

primarily a stringed instrument. (1.)

(1.)
The Abingdon Commentary

Peters, The Psalms as liturgies

Kirkpatrick, The Book of Psalms

The historical background of the music of Israel

Egypt

The background of the music of Israel is found in the musical developments in Egypt, Assyria, and Babylonia, and in Phoenicia. Egyptian music was regarded as sacred, and was credited with Ethos - divine power. The musicians were priests, male or female, and the temple organization included also sacred dancers. Those records which remain of the use of instruments indicate that stringed instruments were more common than percussive. There were the nabla (different kinds of harps), and the kithara (different kinds of lyres). The latter were imported by the Semites at a later date. The double-flute, often found in representations of the music of Egypt, was distinctive in quality and quite different from the single flute and also from the aulos, or pipe. The signal instruments were the trumpet and sistrum. Plato says that the Egyptians accredited their sacred melodies to the goddess Isis. It was at the beginning of the decay of Egypt that the flute was introduced, along with more percussive instruments and a greater emphasis on dancing and singing.

Assyria and Babylonia

Assyrian and Babylonian music was somewhat

similar to that of Egypt. Here, too, percussive instruments were of minor importance, the stress being laid upon vocal music and sweet singing. The hymns and supplications, with responsive form, indicate that Assyrian music had developed to a high level in primitive art form. It ranks next to the Egyptian as a source from which Israel drew its best elements of musical form and instrumentation. From the Ashurakhbal bas-relief one may gain some idea of the character of the music, for here are shown seven string instruments, only two double-flutes and no single-pipies.

Phoenicia

Phoenician music is unexpectedly in sharp contrast to the music of Israel, at least during the period of the Second Temple. The arrangement of the religious orchestra was different and the music of a sensuous and highly exciting character. The Phoenicians went to extremities of joy and lamentation. Chief among instruments was the Abobas, or pipe. They used the kinnor, which the Greeks borrowed and called the kinura, and the neval, which the Greeks knew as the nabla. (1.)

Biblical precedents exclusive of text of Psalter

Tradition ascribes the origin of music to Jubal, one of the three sons of Lamech -

And his brother's name was Jubal:

(1.) Idelsohn, Jewish music in its historical development

> he was the father of all such as
> handle the harp and pipe. Gn.4:21 (1.)

The first uses to which music was put were secular as well as sacred, and it undoubtedly played an important part in the social life of the people. It was used on occasions of rejoicing over victory in battle, as in the song of Moses -

> Then sang Moses and the children
> of Israel this song unto Jehovah,
> and spake, saying, I will sing
> unto Jehovah, for he hath triumphed
> gloriously: the horse and his rider
> hath he thrown into the sea. Ex.15:1

This reference to song comes from about 1200 B.C. The song of Deborah (circ. 1150 B.C.) in Judges:5 is one of the most vivid portrayals in song of the story of a victory. Miriam and her women celebrated the discomfiture of Pharaoh's host with music and dancing -

> And Miriam the prophetess, the sister
> of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand;
> and all the women went out after her
> with timbrels and with dances. Ex.15:20

When Jephthah's daughter met her fate because of her father's rash vow, she -

> came out to meet him with timbrels
> and with dances: Jg.11:34b

Jehoshaphat goes up to the Temple after victory to the accompaniment of music -

(1.) Unless otherwise noted, the Biblical text is from the American Revised Version, N.Y.: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1929

> And they came to Jerusalem with psalteries and harps and trumpets unto the house of Jehovah. II Ch. 20:28

Both song and instrumental music figured at feasts and convivial meetings -

> And the harp and the lute, the tabret and the pipe, and wine, are in their feasts. Is.5:12a

Job grudges music as one feature which makes up the happy life of the wicked -

> They sing to the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the pipe. Job 21:12

Merrymaking at the vintage was celebrated in song; marriage ceremonies included music, even did the children in their sport imitate the songs they had heard. The parting guest was speeded on his way with music -

> Wherefore didst thou flee secretly, and steal away from me, and didst not tell me, that I might have sent thee away with mirth and with songs, with tabret and with harp. Gn.31:27

The coronation of Solomon was made complete with music -

> And the people came up after him, and the people piped with pipes, and rejoiced with great joy, so that the earth rent with the sound of them. I K.1:40

The king had his coterie of singers and instrumental performers -

> I gat me men-singers and women-singers, and the delights of the

> sons of men, musical instruments, and that of all sorts. Ecc.2:8b

The shepherd lads had their lyres with them -

> Then answered one of the young men, and said, Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Beth-lehemite, that is skilful in playing. I Sam. 16:18a

Music had a part in days of mourning; the dirge was a recognized form of Hebrew poetry -

> And Jeremiah lamented for Josiah; and all the singing men and singing women spake of Josiah in their lamentations unto this day; II Ch. 35:25a

Evidence of the susceptibility of Hebrew temperament to music, and some indication of a therapeutic use of music is discernible in the account of David's ministering to Saul - I Sam.16:16-23. When Elisha came to prophesy, he called for a minstrel -

> And Elisha said.....But now bring me a minstrel. And it came to pass, when the minstrel played, that the hand of Jehovah came upon him. II K. 2:14a, 15

In addition to incidental references to music, there are occasional passages which are truly psalmic in character. Such a psalm passage is found in II Sam.23:1-7. Some of these psalms and references to psalmody come from the pre-exilic prophets and would indicate a pre-exilic origin of many psalms. There are some which are oracles concerning the future - Hos.6:1-3 and 14:1 f., Isa.2:1-4,

which is reminiscent of Psalm 122, Amos 6:5,6, which is thought by Gressmann to refer to the sacred songs of Israel. He believes the psalms are as old as sacrificial worship. Isa.20:29 seems to refer to psalms used in Temple worship at the times the pilgrims came to Jerusalem -

> Ye shall have a song as in the night when a holy feast is kept; and gladness of heart, as when one goeth with a pipe to come unto the mountain of Jehovah, to the Rock of Israel. Isa.30:29

A psalm closes the first great section of the prophecy of Isaiah (Chapter 12). Amos 5:2,3 is a national dirge or lamentation, such as may be found in the Psalter. Jer.14: 7-9 and Jer.16:19,20 are also psalmic in form. Hab.3: is a psalm of a theophany very similar in parts to Psalms 18 and 97.

The existence of such material outside the Psalter, yet strikingly similar to it, strongly argues for the supposition that psalmody in Israel had a long and varied history, and that it reaches far behind the era of David. (1.) (2.) (3.) (4.) (5.)

(1.) Peters, The psalms as liturgies

(2.) Dictionary of the Bible

(3.) Gunkel, What remains of the Old Testament

(4.) Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics

(5.) The Abingdon Commentary

CHAPTER I

THE MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS IN USE IN ISRAEL

The musical instruments in use in Israel

Apparently there was little change in the instruments used and named from the beginning to the end of the Psalm period. The same names appear in the books of the Bible through Chronicles. The more frequent mention of instruments in the later Psalms is indicative of a developing use of instrumental music in connection with Psalmody. In Daniel (165 B.C.) a set of new names, of Greek origin, appears. The natural conclusion is that up to and including the time of Chronicles (300 B. C.), there was but little change in instruments and instrumental music among the Hebrews; during the third century B.C., the Greek period, new instruments and a new nomenclature were introduced, but the Psalms were so well established in their phraseology that no new terms were incorporated into the text.

While no representations of Hebrew instruments are preserved, authorities agree in assuming that they were like those of ancient Egypt, Assyria and Babylonia, of which monuments do remain.

> "There is every reason to believe that the art of music among the early Hebrews was essentially the same as that of the Egyptians and the Assyrians, of whose musical performances there are many representations." (1.)

(1.) Encyclopaedia Biblica. Bol.III p.3226

Musical instruments mentioned in Psalter

Examination of the text of the Psalter reveals references to a number of instruments. Without indicating the total number of times each instrument is mentioned, we may note that they comprise the following:

On stringed instruments

The phrase "on stringed instruments" occurs first in the heading of Psalm 4. In the King James Version it is rendered "on Neginoth."

The harp, the psaltery and/or an instrument of ten strings

Psalm 33:2 refers to the harp, the psaltery, and/or an instrument of ten strings -

> Give thanks unto Jehovah with
> the harp:
> Sing praises unto him with the
> psaltery of ten strings.

The King James Version implies that the psaltery is not the instrument of ten strings, for the verse is rendered thus -

> Praise the Lord with harp: sing
> unto him with the psaltery and
> an instrument of ten strings.

In the several references to the harp and psaltery which occur elsewhere in the Psalter, the two are named together more often than either is named alone.

The timbrel

Psalm 81:2 introduces the timbrel, accompanied by the harp and psaltery -

> Raise a song, and bring hither
> the timbrel,
> the pleasant harp with the
> psaltery.

The trumpet

The next verse of the same Psalm (81:3) brings in the trumpet -

> Blow the trumpet at the new
> moon,
> At the full moon, on our
> feast-day.

The cornet

In Psalm 98:5,6 occurs one mention of the harp alone and the first allusion to the cornet -

> Sing praises unto Jehovah with
> the harp;
> With the harp and the voice of
> melody.
> With trumpets and sound of
> cornet
> Make a joyful noise before the
> King, Jehovah.

The pipe or organ

The pipe or organ is mentioned only once in the Psalter, in Psalm 150:4b

> Praise him with stringed instru-
> ments and pipe.

The King James Version uses the following rendition -

> Praise him with stringed instru-
> ments and organs.

The cymbals

Psalm 150 includes a reference to still another instrument not mentioned elsewhere, the cymbals -

> Praise him with loud cymbals:
> Praise him with high sounding
> cymbals. v.5

We have then, in this category of instruments drawn from the text of the Psalter, the harp, the psaltery, an instrument of ten strings, the timbrel, the trumpet, the cornet, the pipe, the organ, and the cymbals. It will readily be seen that these may be classified in the standard orchestral divisions- Percussion, Wind, and String. Thus we have -

<u>Percussion instruments</u>

The timbrel

The cymbals

<u>Wind instruments</u>

The trumpet

The cornet

The pipe

The organ

<u>String instruments</u>

The harp

The psaltery

An instrument of ten strings

A more detailed description of the instruments will follow this order.

Percussion instruments

The timbrel

Toph, tof, drum, hand drum, tabret

The timbrel is the most primitive of instruments, and the most frequently mentioned. It undoubtedly had a place in religious music. It is impossible to be sure of its exact form. In Egyptian representations it is circular and flat, being a hoop with skin stretched tightly over one side of it. Occasionally it was provided with small pieces of metal, which were hung around the rim. It was held in one hand and struck with the other. Among the Hebrews it was played chiefly by the women, more rarely by the men.

King David employed this instrument at the ceremony of the installation of the ark into Jerusalem -

> And David and all the house of Israel
> played before Jehovah with all manner
> of instruments made of firwood, and
> with harps, and with psalteries, and
> with timbrels, and with castanets, and
> with cymbals. II Sam.6:5

Mention is made of such a drum four times in the Psalms, the translation timbrel being used in both the American Revised and the King James Versions -

> The singers went before, the minstrels
> followed after,
> In the midst of the damsels playing
> with timbrels. Ps.68:25

> Raise a song, and bring hither the
> timbrel, Ps.81:2a

> Let them sing praises unto him with timbrel and harp. Ps.149:3b
>
> Praise him with timbrel and dance; Ps. 150:4a

The indications are that the timbrel was used particularly in processions, rather than in the actual ritual of the sacrifice.

The cymbals

Metziltayim, selselim, mesiltaim, meciltaim. Later called tziltzal, cymbal, derived from the Hebrew word tzalal, to sound.

The cymbals are included in the various instruments which David brought to celebrate the dedication of the sanctuary in Jerusalem. Asaph, the chief musician of David, was a cymbal-player -

> and Asaph with cymbals, sounding aloud; I Chron.16:5b

Ezra restored 128 cymbal-players of the Asaph family to their traditional function -

> The singers: the children of Asaph, a hundred twenty and eight. Ezra 2:41
>
> And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of Jehovah, they set the priests in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites the sons of Asaph with cymbals, to praise Jehovah, after the order of David king of Israel. Ezra 3:10

The cymbals were made of brass, bronze or copper, and were similar in shape to those in use today, discs struck together by the performer. Josephus describes

them as large, broad plates of bronze (Antiq.vii 12: 3). The use of the cymbals was restricted to giving the beat to the performers, being the instrument by which the chief musician led his performers; it marked the time. Therefore cymbals were not used while the singing and playing of other instruments were going on, but rather to punctuate the pauses and indicate the next entrance of voice or instrument.

Cymbals are mentioned once in the Psalms -

> Praise him with loud cymbals:
> Praise him with high sounding
> cymbals. Ps.150:5

It is possible that two types of cymbals are indicated by the descriptive words "loud" and "high sounding," though clear proof of such an assertion is not available. The probability is that the former were of a size approximate to those in use today, and that the latter were much smaller, fastened to the thumb and forefinger and used frequently in dancing.

<u>The castanets</u>

Mena'an'im, sistra, sistrum, cornet

This instrument, mentioned in II Sam.6:5, does not appear in the text of the Psalter, but should be included in a discussion of the instruments nevertheless. Although it cannot be said with certainty that it was used in connection with the rendition of Psalms, it seems probable.

A striking difference in translation is noted in this connection. The American Revised uses the word castanets, while the King James renders it cornet (II Sam.6:5). The translation sistra is considered the most accurate. The sistrum was a kind of rattle, consisting of a handle supporting an oval metal frame through which ran a number of cross bars with projecting ends upon which rings of metal were placed. When the instrument was shaken, these rings rattled. It is of Egyptian origin, where it was used in public worship, especially of Isis. (1.)

(1.) Section on percussion instruments

Peters, The psalms as liturgies

Idelsohn, Jewish music in its historical development

Encyclopaedia Biblica

Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics

Wellhausen, The music of the ancient Hebrews

Stainer, The music of the Bible

Wind instruments

The trumpet

Silver trumpet, hatzozerah, khacocerah, hasoserah, chatzotzera

The trumpet seems to have been imported from Egypt, though it was also known to the Assyrians. The first direct reference to it is in connection with Moses -

> And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Make thee two trumpets of silver; of beaten work shalt thou make them: and thou shalt use them for the calling of the congregation, and for the journeying of the camps. Num.10:1,2

By the blowing of the trumpet feasts were announced. There are two trumpets shown with the golden Table of Showbread on the relief of the Arch of Titus. The form of the trumpet is also preserved on a Jewish coin of the later part of the period of the Second Temple.

According to the description by Josephus, (Antiq.iii 12,6) the trumpet, or assora, was nearly a yard long; it was a little wider than the flute, with a slight expansion near the mouth-piece, to catch the breath, and it ended in a bell, like the war-trumpets.

The trumpet however, unlike the shofar, was used almost exclusively for religious purposes. During the time of the post-exilic Temple only the priests were allowed to blow them, to signal a ritual act or a change

of liturgical motive. Two words were used to designate the different ways of playing, tekia - long notes, "blowing," and terna - short notes, staccato, "shouting." These same directions are used in connection with the shofar.

Originally two trumpets were ordered as a minimum, with a maximum of a hundred and twenty.

Three times in the Psalms mention is made of a trumpet, though there is some question as to whether in all cases the translation should read thus, or whether the ram's horn, the shofar (to be discussed) might be meant -

> God is gone up with a shout,
> Jehovah with the sound of a
> trumpet. Ps.47:5
>
> Blow the trumpet at the new moon,
> At the full moon, on our feast-day.
> Ps.81:3
>
> Praise him with trumpet sound:
> Ps.150:3a

<u>The horn</u>

Shophar, shofar, keren, ram's horn, cornet

The shophar was literally the natural horn of an animal, either the curved horn of the male or the straight horn of the female. The latter was used less often. It is essentially a signalling instrument, used in the making of secular and religious announcements. In the early days, to the shophar was attributed the magic

power of frightening and dispersing evil spirits and the gods of the enemies. The blowing of it is even ascribed to Yahve -

> and the Lord Jehovah will blow the trumpet. Zech.9:15b

After the Second Destruction the idea of blowing the Shofar of Redemption was transferred to the prophet Elijah, who is supposed to announce the coming of the Messiah.

The ram's horn produces few tones, approximately the intervals of tonic - dominant - octave, c, g, c, or the equivalent. The pitch is, of course, dependent on the size of the horn and the construction of the hollow. It lends itself to the production of long sustained notes down to thirty-second notes. It can hardly be called a "musical" instrument, since it cannot create melody. In spite of this fact it is the one instrument which has been retained in the synagogue down to the present day.

In addition to their use as signalling instruments, the horns might be employed in combination with other instruments to augment the joyous uproar of the people in some secular celebration, not to accompany singing or melody. They are essentially tools of tern-ah, noise. Three methods of blowing are recorded, taka - in blasts, masak - sostenuto, and heria - with vibrating tone.

The pipe

Flute, halil, chalil, khalil

Alamoth

Uggav, abbub, ugab

The first set of names in this group indicates the big pipe, mono-aulos in Greek. We do not find its name on the list of instruments of service throughout the First Temple. At the time of the Second Temple it was permitted at the service only on twelve festal days, "to increase joy." The number was set at a minimum of two and a maximum of twelve. No playing of the halil was allowed on the Sabbath, for it was not held to be a sacred instrument, but was rather considered exciting, and so was used for occasions of extreme joy or sorrow, weddings, funerals, etc.

The fore-runner of the halil, the Greek aulos, had been introduced into Greece from Asia Minor about 800 B.C., but the Greek philosophers opposed it because of its stirring sound and because of the chromatic tetrachord to which it was tuned, a scale which later became important in Jewish music - d, c sharp, b double-flat, and a.

Halil means "bored instrument." It was originally made of reed, afterwards of wood, bored through. It varied in length, tone and the number of finger-holes.

The tone was usually sharp and penetrating, resembling the oboe tone, though this did not prevent its being essentially peaceful, and the characteristic instrument of mourning. Even the poorest man was expected to provide two flute-players for the funeral of his wife.

The word "Alamoth" may signify the double-flute, a favorite instrument among the Hebrews. This name is similar to the Greek Elymos, which was produced in Phrygia from a certain kind of wood, and originally imported there from Assyria. The name Elymos may come from an Assyrian root, elamu - confronting, usually employed for two bodies close together and yet parted. Such a description applies perfectly to the structure of the Alamoth. It is not mentioned in the list of instruments employed in the Second Temple, but the double-pipe was always found in the old orchestras in Egypt, Assyria and Greece as a highly-regarded instrument.

The organ

The uggav was probably a small pipe or flute, in contrast with the larger halil. It is reported to have been one of the two instruments retained from the First Temple, but when it became defective it could not be repaired, so gradually disappeared.

The term uggav or ugab is sometimes translated as being the generic term for all wind instruments,

rather than the name for any particular one.

There is also the tradition that it is a syrinx, Pan's pipe, or even a bag-pipe. However, while there are many representations of flutes on Egyptian and Assyrian monuments, none appears to be a bag-pipe. The most probably conclusion is that the ugab is a simply-constructed wind instrument, either one or a collection of pipes. The Septuagint has three renderings of the term, kithara - Gn.4:21, psalmos - Job 21:12, 30:31, and organon - Ps.150:4. In the Authorized Version it is called simply organ. However the word Magrepha, pipe-organ, also is used and the instrument described in Talmudic literature as being similar to the syrinx, i.e., constructed of a skin-covered box into which were fastened ten reeds, each with ten holes, each hole being able to produce ten different notes. The tone was very strong and it was used only for signalling purposes, to call the Levites and priests to their duties. It is further recorded in the Talmund that there was no organum hydraulium at the Temple because its sweet and powerful tone would distract the attention of the worshippers from the traditional instruments. (1.)

(1.) Section on Wind instruments

Idelsohn, Jewish music in its historical development

Encyclopaedia Biblica

Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics

Peters, The psalms as liturgies

Stainer, The music of the Bible

Wellhausen, The music of the ancient Hebrews

String instruments

The harp

Kinnor, lyre, kithara

The general term for string instruments in Hebrew is minnim, bow-strings. There is no certain way of distinguishing between the three manifestations of string instruments which we found mentioned in the Psalms, the harp, the psaltery, and an instrument of ten strings.

Kinnor is a mimetic word derived from the rustling sound of the strings. It has been identified with a number of instruments, the tanbur, or tinbur, a kind of guitar, a lute, the trigon or portable triangular harp. In all probability the kinnor was like the kithara which was of Asiatic origin and introduced by the Semites into Egypt. Representations on Jewish coins of the second century B.C. clearly resemble the Greek kithara. The strings were fixed in a strong oval body resting on a kettle-shaped or vase-like sounding box, the frame being of simple construction and nearly square. The projecting arms were curved and joined by a cross-bar to which the strings, varying in number from three to six, were fixed.(1.) Another description of the kinnor maintains that it had no resonant body, and that no information is definite as to the number of strings, which might vary from three to twenty-two. (2.)

(1.) Dictionary of the Bible

(2.) Idelsohn, Jewish Music in its historical development

Josephus calls the kinnor a "little harp", allots to it ten strings, and further states that the Semitic form of it was square, but the Phoenician and Assyrian and Assyrian forms were triangular.

Investigations as to the exact tonality, range and pitch of this and other string instruments are not fruitful. The tone quality of the kinnor is described as "sweet," "tender," and "soft." It was apparently popular among the more cultured classes of Israel, for use on secular as well as sacred occasions.

There is very little doubt that the earliest Semitic and Egyptian stringed instruments were swept or plucked with the fingers, and that the plectrum appeared later. The bow was entirely unknown. The instrument was not placed upon the ground, but held under the arm, or rested against the shoulder. The performer could walk while playing. David made the harp of kerosh, but it is recorded that Solomon made kinnors of almug wood for use in the Temple, almug presumably being a valuable wood. The name is traced to a Syrian root, kinroth.

Stainer gives four arguments for connecting the Hebrew kinnor with the lyre, as follows:

1. The lyre was the first stringed instrument, with representations found on the bas-relief at Tell-Loh, among the ruins of the early Babylonish king, Gudea, (3000-2800 B.C.)

2. It was always considered the national instrument of the Hebrews, and the favorite of David, their greatest king and hero.

3. The ancient Egyptian name for lyre is Kn-an-aul, which is closely akin to the word kinnor.

4. In early Arabic versions of the Scriptures the word is frequently translated kissari, which is a transliteration of kithara, still surviving in the name of the Ethiopian lyre.

The psaltery

Nevel, nablium, psalm, lute, viol, nebel

The first mention of the psaltery occurs in I Sam.10:5

> .....thou shalt meet a band of prophets coming down from the high place with a psaltery and a timbrel.

The word nebel means literally "water-skin" and secondarily "pitcher." It is traced by some scholars to a root meaning "rounded vase" or "leather Bottle." The comparative lateness of references to the nebel in the Bible would suggest that it was of rather highly developed construction.

The word azor is often associated with nebel, and is traceable to the root ten, perhaps indicating the "instrument of ten strings" mentioned in the Psalms.

The Egyptian harp was bow-shaped and the Assyrian triangular. Both apparently were used by the Hebrews.

The most outstanding difference between ancient and modern harps is the absence in the ancient of a third side to the wooden framework. The strings were usually of gut, occasionally of twisted thread.

String instruments were in wide use, on various sorts of occasions. Only at times of mourning was their music silent, for they were commonly regarded as being bright in character, suitable for joyous celebrations, feasts, festal processions, domestic ceremonials, and certain kinds of religious services.

As has been noted, the harp and psaltery are most frequently mentioned together -

> It is a good thing to give thanks
> unto Jehovah,
> ...With an instrument of ten strings,
> and with the psaltery;
> With a solemn sound upon the harp.
> Ps.92:1a,3
>
> Awake, psaltery and harp:
> I myself will awake right early.
> Ps.108:2
>
> Awake up, my glory: awake,
> psaltery and harp. Ps.57:8a
>
> Praise him with psaltery and harp.
> Ps.150:3b
>
> Give thanks unto Jehovah with the
> harp:
> Sing praises unto him with the
> Psaltery of ten strings. Ps.33:2
>
> I will also praise thee with the
> psaltery,
> Even thy truth, O my God:

Unto thee will I sing praises with
the harp,
O thou Holy One of Israel. Ps.71:22

Raise a song, and bring hither the
timbrel,
The pleasant harp with the psaltery.
Ps.81:2

Then will I go unto the altar of God,
Unto God my exceeding joy;
And upon the harp will I praise thee,
O God, my God. Ps.43:4

I will sing a new song unto thee,
O God:
Upon a psaltery of ten strings will
I sing praises unto thee. Ps.144:9

It is evident in these citations from the text of the Psalter that string instruments were in wide use among the people of Israel. (1.)

(1.) Peters, The psalms as liturgies

Idelsohn, Jewish music in its historical development

Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics

Encyclopaedia Biblica

Stainer, The music of the Bible

Wellhausen, The music of the ancient Hebrews

CHAPTER II

CHARACTER OF THE VOCAL MUSIC

Historical background previous to the time of the Chronicler

The opening of the Persian period was not favorable to the development of music. Before the arrival of Nehemiah at Jerusalem many Levites left the profession because of receiving no money. Nehemiah provided for their needs through financial reorganization, and it is probably due to his efforts that the first liturgical collection of psalms (comprising the first Book of the present Psalter) was made.

Liturgical worship was gradually elaborated through the Persian period, with the Greek influence becoming more apparent. There are ample grounds for the supposition that this movement raised the level of Temple music and the methods by which it was rendered.

The musical revolution

In the time of David,Asaph, Heman and Jeduthun were appointed the grand-masters of song in the tabernacle. Asaph had four sons, Heman fourteen, and Jeduthun six, thus making twenty-four in all. These became the leaders of twenty-four bands of musicians who served in the temple by turns. No doubt they were responsible for the construction of small psalters, and their names are attached to the use of certain Psalms.

The post-exilic period musicians were of a different order, inferior to the Levites. Gradually their status was raised until they assumed Levitical rank,

yet remained inferior to the Levites proper. The significance of this change lies in the fact that there was an accompanying elaboration of the method of rendering psalmody.

Of great importance was the division of the order of priests and Levites into twenty-four courses. The time is uncertain, but such a division existed during the period of the Chronicler. The re-arrangement became necessary because the priests and Levites were so numerous that it was impossible for them all to perform their official functions at the same time. As independent choirs the musicians ceased to exist, and it is not certain whether members of former choirs would use their own guild-psalters. The absence of musical directions from Books 4 and 5 of the present Psalter is a strong argument that these collections are of a later date.

(1.) (2.) (3.)

David's ordinances for the service of song

Binnie (4.) notes two ordinances made by David for the service of song.

1. He introduced into the House of the Lord a Service of Song and set apart a numerous company selected from the three principal families of

(1.) Hutchinson, Music of the Bible

(2.) Keet, A liturgical study of the Psalter

(3.) Jewish Encyclopaedia

(4.) Binnie, The Psalms, their history, teachings and use

the sacred tribe to minister continually in the new office.

2. He formed in Jerusalem a School of Psalmody in connection with the sanctuary. The Law of Moses had made no provision for a stated Service of Song in the tabernacle. I Chron. 15:16-22 indicates the elaborate arrangements made for the solemn occasion of bearing the ark into the city.

   The proper Psalms were appointed for every day of the week in the Second Temple, and a cycle of Psalms beginning with the 113th, "hallel" was regularly sung at Passover and other solemn feasts.

   The Service of Song was undoubtedly used in family worship and in social gatherings.

The Temple chorus

According to the Mishna, the Temple chorus consisted of a minimum of twelve adult male singers, the maximum being limitless. Singers were admitted to the choir at the age of thirty and served up to the age of fifty, when the decline of the voice began. Before admittance a five-year period of training was required. Sons of the Levites were permitted to participate in the choir.

Thus the chorus equaled in number the perform-

ers on instruments. The superiority of vocal music is pronounced by the fact that later a regulation stipulated that even non-Levites could play instruments, but only Levites were permitted to sing. Music was considered primarily as a medium for conveying ideas, which partially accounts for the superiority of vocal music.

There is little indication that women took part in liturgical singing; their participation in the Temple choir is nowhere traceable. They may have had some share in secular music. (1.) (2.)

Two words appearing in the titles of the Psalms are thought to refer to special choirs. "Alamoth" is very likely a designation for a female choir. If, as Thirtle maintains, the titles are misplaced and Psalm 45 rather than Psalm 46 should be designated as "Set to Alamoth" it is not difficult to reconcile the use of such a term, since Psalm 45 is essentially feminine in character, quite out of the question for male voices to sing.

The designation for the male choir is "Sheminith," apparently meaning eight or the eighth, therefore an octave lower, or suitable for male voices.

Thirtle is emphatic in his statement -

"There can be no doubt that there were

(1.) Idelsohn, Jewish music in its historical development

(2.) Keet, A liturgical study of the Psalter

male and female choirs, in a distinctive sense, in the Temple service." (1.)

(1.) Thirtle, The titles of the Psalms, p.105

CHAPTER III

MUSICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PSALM TITLES

Musically significant titles of Psalms

The titles in the Psalter are valuable as indications of certain musical usages, instrumentation, style of singing, tune used with Psalm, etc.

The catalogue of such inscriptions follows:

Psalm	4.	For the chief musician
"	5.	With the Nehiloth
"	6.	Set to the Sheminith
"	7.	Shiggaion of David
"	8.	Set to the Gittith
"	9.	Set to Muth-labben
"	16.	Michtam of David
"	22.	Set to Aijeleth hash-shahar
"	32.	Maschil
"	39.	For Jeduthun
"	46.	Set to Alamoth
"	56.	Set to Jonath elem rehokim
"	57.	Set to Al-tashheth
"	60.	Set to Shushan Eduth
"	69.	Set to Shoshannim
"	80.	Set to Shoshannim Eduth
"	88.	Set to Mahalath Leannoth
"	120.	A Song of Ascents
"	4.	On stringed instruments

For the chief musician

The heading "For the chief musician" sometimes rendered "To the chief musician," or "Of the precentor," is prefixed to fifty-five Psalms, most of which bear the name of David. There is little doubt that the original M'nacceach means precentor or the conductor of the temple choir. The preposition "for" probably indicates that it was to be handed over to the precentor for musical setting and performance. If the preposition is "of" it may indicate that the psalm belonged to the older collection known as The Precentor's Collection. (1.)

With the Nehiloth

The phrase "With the Nehiloth" is occasionally rendered "Mahalath" or "Machalath." The preposition "Upon" may replace "With the." Authorities are fairly unanimous in regarding it as meaning with wind instruments, possibly flutes. (1.) (2.) (3.)

One citation differentiates between Mahalath and Nehiloth, indicating that the former may mean sickness or calamity as well as a musical instrument. (4.)

Another authority explains Nehiloth as meaning inheritance rather than flute. (5.)

(1.) Kirkpatrick, The Book of Psalms

(2.) Peters, The Psalms as liturgies

(3.) Stainer, The Music of the Bible

(4.) Dictionary of the Bible

(5.) Thirtle, The titles of the Psalms

Set to the Sheminith

"Set to the Sheminith" or "Upon Sheminith" is generally conceded to mean a low pitch, perhaps bass. This explanation is derived from the fact that the word connotes "eight" or "eighth." It is possible that the reference is to an instrument, perhaps a bass viol of eight strings. (1.) (2.) (3.)

Shiggaion of David

The exact meaning of the term "Shiggaion" is obscure. There are two possible explanations. The word may come from the Hebrew root shagag, which indicates a secret or unwitting sin, for the atonement of which a special ritual was provided. (2.)

The term may have poetic significance, denoting a particular kind of poetry, from the meaning "to wander" - a dithyrambic poem. (1.)

Set to the Gittith

The titles of Psalms 8, 81 and 84 bear the inscription "Set to the Gittith" or "Upon Gittith." The word Gittith is a feminine adjective derived from Gath, and means either some Gittite instrument or a Gittite melody, e.g. the march of the Gittite guard. "Over the

(1.) Kirkpatrick, The Book of Psalms

(2.) Peters, The Psalms as liturgies

(3.) Dictionary of the Bible

winepresses" may be the true meaning, indicating that these Psalms were sung at the Feast of Tabernacles or Ingathering at the end of the vintage. (1.)

If an instrument is designated, it is probably a stringed instrument rather than wind, from Gath. (2.)

It is suggested that the instrument might be in the form of a wine-press. (3.)

Set to Muth-labben

"Set to Muth-labben" is one of the obscure titles which probably refers to the tune to which the Psalm is to be sung. It may be rendered as "Die for the Son" or "Death makes white." (1.) (3.)

Michtam of David

"Michtam" or sometimes "Miktam" appears in the titles of six Psalms, always preceded or followed by "of David." If it is a musical term, the meaning is now obscure. Different explanations are -

a. for an inscription, a poem of epigrammatic character.

b. the humble and sincere, or blameless.

c. a golden psalm.

d. an unpublished poem

e. a psalm of hidden, mysterious meaning. (1.)

(1.) Kirkpatrick, The Book of Psalms

(2.) Peters, The Psalms as liturgies

(3.) Dictionary of the Bible

It is possible that Michtam designates a Psalm to be used in some penitential manner, since the root meaning is to stain or cover, to conceal. Usually the word Lammenazzeah appears with Michtam. Outside of the Psalms this word connotes a foreman or overseer; as a musical direction it would mean "of the director" or "of the musical director." (1.)

Set to Aijeleth hash-shahar

The title "Set to Aijeleth hash-shahar" sometimes "Ayyeleth hash-shachar" is another of the mysterious phrases which may refer to a folk melody. It is rendered "Set to the tune of Hind of the Dawn" or "Hind of the morning." (2.)

If translated "Concerning the morning aid" it may refer to one of the sacrifices. (3.)

Maschil

The title "Maschil" or "Maskil" appears to designate Psalms used in the great temple feasts, sometimes rehearsing in poetry the history of God's dealings with the children of Israel. It heads thirteen Psalms. (1.)

So far as etymology serves, the term no doubt meant a contemplative composition, but came to

(1.) Peters, The Psalms as liturgies

(2.) Kirkpatrick, The Book of Psalms

(3.) Dictionary of the Bible

mean simply a poem. (1.)

It has been otherwise explained as:

a. a didactic psalm

b. meditation

c. a skilful psalm

d. as denoting something more definite than the ordinary mizmor, a "cunning" psalm, with a musical setting of especially delicate or artistic character. (2.)

For Jeduthun

The title "For Jeduthun," "To Jeduthun" or "Yeduthun" are thought to refer to David's chief musician, and to signify a Psalm set to a melody composed by or called after him. (2.)

It is possible that an instrument named for such an individual is indicated. (1.)

It has also been suggested that the phrase refers to a special choir, one which has the particular duty of singing Psalms of thanksgiving and praise to God. (3.)

Set to Alamoth

"Set to Alamoth," "Al-alamoth" means literally "on maidens" and therefore may designate an instrument of treble pitch, perhaps the nebel, since it is

(1.) Peters, The Psalms as liturgies

(2.) Kirkpatrick, The Book of Psalms

(3.) Thirtle, The titles of the Psalms

occasionally known as alamoth. (1.)

Alamoth may be rendered "in soprano" and indicate either an instrument, or "in the manner of maidens." (2.) (3.)

Set to Jonath elem rehokim

The name of another tune used in the performance of Psalms is indicated in the title "Set to Jonath elem rehokim," or "Yonath elem rechokim." It may be translated as "The silent dove of them that are afar off" or "The dove of the distant terebinths." (2.) (3.)

Set to Al-tashheth

The phrase "Set to Al-tashheth" or "Al-taschith" means "Set to the tune of destroy not." It would appear that this was the song of those who trod the grapes, those conceived of as bloody men, in whose blood the righteous wash their feet, from whom cometh the red wine in the cup of Yahweh. (1.) (3.)

Set to Shushan Eduth

Set to Shoshannim

Set to Shoshannim Eduth

The three phrases "Shushan Eduth - Shoshannim and Shoshannim Eduth" all have to do with a tune which may be rendered as "The melody of lilies." (2.) (3.)

(1.) Peters, The Psalms as liturgies

(2.) Kirkpatrick, The Book of Psalms

(3.) Dictionary of the Bible

Set to Mahalath Leannoth

The title "Set to Mahalath Leannoth" refers to a particular style of singing, the antiphonal. The word "Leannoth" probably means "to answer," thus indicating this responsive type of singing. This structure of text was used to be sung antiphonally by the Levites and pilgrims journeying to Jerusalem. (1.) (2.)

A Song of Ascents

A ritualistic usage is indicated in the title "A Song of Ascents - A Song of Degrees - For the Goings up." There are four possible explanations of the phrase:

a. Such Psalms were sung upon the flight of fifteen steps leading from the court of women to the court of men in the Second Temple.

b. It indicates a Psalm built on an ascending structure, each verse taking up and repeating a word or clause from the preceding verse.

c. "Ascent" or "Going up" is the regular term for the return from Babylon, so these may have been the Psalms sung by the returning exiles.

d. "To go up" also indicates the pilgrimages made to Jerusalem at the times of the great festivals. These, then, are the Psalms sung by pilgrims on

(1.) Stainer, The music of the Bible

(2.) Keet, A liturgical study of the Psalter

their way. (1.)

On stringed instruments

The phrase "On stringed instruments" or "Neginoth" which appears in the titles of six Psalms is a direction that those Psalms are to be led by neginoth, which is the most primitive and simplest expression for stringed instruments. (2.)

Thirtle (3.) explains "Neginoth" as the one undoubted reference to musical instruments - it refers to a stringed instrument choir.

Musical significance of other terms

Selah

The word "Selah" occurs seventy-one times in thirty-nine Psalms. Its precise meaning is uncertain, since it is a technical term of great antiquity. It is probable it refers to the musical accompaniment. There are various traditions regarding its significance, as follows:

a. Selah may be rendered diapsalma, forte, or an instrumental interlude while singing ceases.

b. One of the most ancient Jewish traditions interprets the word to mean "forever."

c. Of the modern explanations, the most generally

(1.) Kirkpatrick, The Book of Psalms

(2.) Peters, The Psalms as liturgies

(3.) Thirtle, The titles of the Psalms

accepted is that Selah is derived from a root meaning "to raise" and signifies "up." It is, then, a direction to the musicians to strike up, either with a louder accompaniment, or with an interlude while the singing ceases. In the majority of cases it is found at the end of a strophe, or before the introduction of a new thought, the natural place for an interlude.

d. The explanation in the Oxford Hebrew lexicon is that Selah is a liturgical direction to the congregation, meaning lift up your voices in the benediction "Blessed be Jehovah for ever and ever" or "Extol Jehovah for ever and ever." Accordingly it indicates the place of the benediction. (1.)

Peters (2.) explains Selah as a rubrical direction which has been inserted in the text of the Psalter.

Higgaion

The term "Higgaion" is used with Selah in Psalm 9:17, and is also a musical liturgical word. The root hagah seems to mean muttering, a deep throbbing sound. It carries also the sense of meditation, and indicates murmuring rather than resounding music. (1.) (2.)

Mizmor

The word "Mizmor" is prefixed to fifty-seven Psalms and is usually preceded or followed by the name of

(1.) Kirkpatrick, The Book of Psalms

(2.) Peters, The Psalms as liturgies

the author, generally David. The verb from which Mizmor is derived occurs frequently in the Psalter and appears originally to have meant "to make melody," but it came to be applied especially to instrumental music as distinguished from vocal. The word "zamaru" is similarly used in Babylonian ritual. (1.)

Shir

The word "Shir" or "Song" is the specific title for songs of the Levitical choirs with musical accompaniment. It may be applied to secular as well as sacred songs. When it appears in the titles it is generally preceded or followed by Mizmor. (1.) (2.)

Possible explanation of titles

The evident confusion which has arisen around the titles and musical terms in the Psalter has been traced by Thirtle (3.) to ancient literature. An examination of such ancient literature reveals the lack of an adequate system of paragraphing and punctuation. Thirtle maintains that a consideration of a psalm which stands by itself - Habakkuk Chapter 3 - indicates the solution of the problem. At the head of this psalm we have the statement of its class, "A prayer," its author,"of Habakkuk," and its special character, "set to Shigionoth." At the end

(1.) Kirkpatrick, The Book of Psalms

(2.) Peters, The Psalms as liturgies

(3.) Thirtle, The titles of the Psalms

there is a statement which is exclusively musical, "For the Chief Musician, on my stringed instruments." Thirtle further suggests that in the composition which has made up the Psalter there has been a displacement of the "Chief Musician" line.

> "Through an unfortunate error it has, in every case, been placed at the beginning of the psalm following that to which it rightly belongs." (1.)
>
> "....in a proper arrangement of the material, the lines at the top of a psalm should do this and no more - (1) describe the piece, whether a Song, a Psalm, Michtam, etc.; (2) state the author, David, Asaph, sons of Korah, etc.; (3) set out the circumstances of its composition, as is the case in thirteen historical psalms (Doeg, Ziphites, When Saul sent, etc.); or the object for which it was written ('To bring to remembrance,' 'For the Sabbath day,' etc.). Anything not coming within this description belongs to the preceding psalm." (2.)

It is quite certain the titles were not, in all cases, part of the original text, for in many instances the contents show that the Psalms belong to an historical situation other than that indicated in the titles. The Psalter undoubtedly contains numerous pre-exilic psalms and fragments thereof. Incidental references to music, as in Amos 5:23 -

> Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols.

(1.) Thirtle, <u>The titles of the Psalms</u>, p.13

(2.) ibid., p.16

suggest that religious songs or psalms were known and used as early as the eighth century B.C.E. (1.)

(1.) Eiselen, The Psalms and other sacred writings.

CHAPTER IV

THE PLACE OF THE PSALMS IN RITUAL AND LITURGY

The relation of public and private worship

Far greater importance is attached to the Temple music after the Exile than before it. By that time music had become a principal part of solemn religious worship. Our knowledge is confined to general facts - the Temple music consisted of choral singing with instrumental accompaniment and was performed by professional singers and musicians. (1.)

The singing of Psalms was originally a part of worship. The songs thus sung in the public sanctuary were carried over into private worship. Gunkel (2.) cites the following types:

1. Hymns, originally sung as choruses or solos at a sacred feast.
2. Songs of praise, akin to the hymns used in public thanksgivings.
3. National dirges, rendered by the choir at times of national stress or calamity.
4. Court songs, sung by the singers in the Temple in the presence of the Royal Court.
5. Individual dirges, first sung in the sanctuary by individuals in times of personal stress, such as sickness, in protestation of innocence or in acknowledgment of sin, and later used in private rituals.

(1.) Wellhausen, The music of the ancient Hebrews

(2.) Gunkel, What remains of the Old Testament

6. Individual songs of praise, originally sung to accompany a thank-offering for deliverance out of great distress.

Such hymns were sung by or in the presence of the assembled congregation at the sacred festivals. A trumpet was blown in order that the sound might reach heaven.

In private lives innumerable occasions arose for the paying of vows, and rituals were carefully outlined. The Psalter is largely a collection of such cult hymns, once intended for the use of individuals or communities, but gradually attached to one of the great festivals, a procession to the Temple, etc. The occasion influenced the musical rendition of the Psalm. (1.)

Historical background of the style of singing

The roots of the vocal song of the Temple are in foreign song, even occasional foreign tunes. There were three forms of public singing, based upon the principle of response:

1. The leader intoned the first half-verse, the congregation repeated it, and in all succeeding sections repeated the same half-verse, although the leader progressed through the entire text.
2. The leader sang a half-verse at a time and the congregation repeated what he last sang. This was supposedly the form in which the children were instructed.

(1.) Welch, The Psalter in life, worship and history

3. Responsive singing in the real sense, the leader singing the whole first line, the congregation responding with the entire second line, etc. The Shema was recited in public in this form and it is still used by the Babylonian Jews for chanting the Hallel on Passover.

The ancient Assyrians and Babylonians had already used such responsive forms, especially the first above.

Refrains such as Amen, Halleluyah, Hoshianah (Oh! Help!) Anenu (Answer us!) were frequently used in public worship. (1.)

The Chronicler's account cannot be accepted as accurate. He antedates the religious practise of his own day. There must have been a considerable musical staff in the First Temple, since a body of singers called the children of Asaph is listed in the group of those who returned from the Exile -

> The singers: the children of Asaph,
> a hundred forty and eight. Neh.7:44
>
> The singers: the children of Asaph,
> a hundred twenty and eight. Ezra 2:41

These would be the descendants of those who had held office before the fall of Jerusalem, for it is impossible that the organization of a staff of Temple musicians was the work of the Exile. We must conclude that the use of music was an established practice.

(1.) Idelsohn, <u>Jewish music in its historical development</u>

Many of the social festivities with which music was associated had a religious significance. Gradually, and naturally, music became associated with the religious practices. As the celebrations became more elaborate, the provision for the employment of music with them became more complex. In I Samuel 16:18 David is described as an expert flute-player -

> Then answered one of the young men, and said, Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Beth-lehemite, that is skilful in playing,

and in Amos 6:5b reference is made to his invention of musical instruments -

> that invent for themselves instruments of music, like David;

If the account of Chronicles is accepted, then David has the credit for making provisions for Temple musical services.

The information is somewhat fuller with regard to the Temple music of post-Exilic times. There existed a large staff of Temple musicians, grouped together in guilds which were called by the name of the head of the family from whom they were descended. Their particular function was to accompany the daily burnt-offering and other parts of the service with song and instrumental music. (1.)

(1.) Keet, <u>A liturgical study of the Psalter</u>

The Psalter as the hymnbook of the Jewish Temple

The Psalter, as the hymnbook of the Jewish church, represents the popular element in religion as against the credal, legal and intellectual elements. Two kinds of Psalms exist - those standing quite abreast of the thought of the prophets in intellectuality and spirituality, and those standing close to the ritual acts which represent the very primitive conceptions. There are a few Psalms which are definite attempts to teach doctrine or inculcate law.

> "As a whole, however, the Psalter represents what we may roughly call the popular theology, inconsistent and untheological, to speak paradoxically, not to be compared too closely with the ritual of the priests, the canons of the law giver, or the sermons of the prophets, but singularly sweet and lovely for the very divine humanity of it." (1.)

Undoubtedly those with musical, ritual, and other headings and annotations were the most frequently used in the Temple services, since they are most carefully organized from the liturgical standpoint.

The Psalter bears striking resemblance to the modern conception of a hymnbook, for it is compiled by persons who cannot claim direct authorship of the Psalms. The units which make it up are the productions of many different writers, widely separated in style and time. Some of the Psalms are adapted for public worship,

(1.) Peters, The Psalms as liturgies, p.76

appeal forcibly to the individual for his private worship and devotions. In the Psalter, as in the finest of modern hymnals, the author's name is given, and some indication of the writing of the Psalm, or a direction as to how it should be sung. (1.)

The daily sacrifice

The privilege of worshipping was regarded by the Israelite as one of the greatest of joys. Psalmody came toward the end of the ceremonies. In the morning sacrifice, after many rites, the victim was slaughtered and its blood sprinkled on the altar. The sacrifice was then divided into several portions and spcial priests (who had drawn lots to ascertain their duties) carried the portions to the altar ascent. Then followed a service of prayer and benedictions, descriptions of which are somewhat vague. Apparently the priests recited a benediction, the Ten Commandments, the Shema and three more benedictions. Then came the offering of incense, accompanied by various rites. The priests entered the sanctuary and completed their tasks, then came the priestly blessing. The sacrifice was actually offered here, followed by the presentation of the high-priest's meat offering. There followed preparations for the offering of the drink-libation known as the nesek. When the officiating priests were about to pour this out, two priests with silver

(1.) Van Dyke, The story of the Psalms

trumpets stood near, the cymbals being in position between them. As the priests with trumpets moved toward the cymbals, the signal was given and the drink-oblation offered.

At this point the Levites sang the liturgical Psalm for the day, in the cantillation of which three pauses were always made. These were probably the musical interludes indicated by the word Selah, and they provided an opportunity for the priests to sound the trumpets and for the people to prostrate themselves in prayer.

It would appear that the priests looked in the direction of the worshippers, while the Levites stood on the steps which led to the court of the priests, and faced the Holy Place.

The singing of the Psalm concluded the sacrificial service, but after the sacrifice had been offered the Levites sang Psalm 105:1-15 in the morning and Psalm 96 in the evening.

Many private sacrifices were offered after the completion of the public ceremony.

The Sabbath sacrifice

Worship on the Sabbath was very like the daily sacrifice, but a little more elaborate. Psalm 92 was used in place of the daily Psalm, as being particularly appropriate for the Sabbath. When the additional sacrifice

peculiar to the Sabbath had been offered, the Levites sang the Song of Moses, from Deuteronomy 32: in the morning and the same song from Exodus 15: in the evening. (1.)

In the time of the Second Temple each day of the week had its particular Psalm:

Sunday	- Psalm	24
Monday	- "	48
Tuesday	- "	82
Wednesday	- "	94
Thursday	- "	81
Friday	- "	93
Sabbath	- "	92

Others were appointed for public worship on intervening feast days. (2.)

The ritual of the Temple as described by Lord

The ritual of the Temple as described by Lord (3.) does not differ materially from the outline previously presented from Keet.

As the people ascend the steps of the Temple, led by the High Priest and accompanied by inferior priests and Levites to meet the king at the threshold of the great gate, they chant a Psalm song of degrees or ascents, e.g. Psalm 121. As they enter the gate their attention is fixed on typical objects to stimulate their worship by renewing

(1.) Keet, A liturgical study of the Psalter

(2.) Delitzsch, A Commentary on the Book of Psalms

(3.) Lord, Psalter re-adjusted in its relation to the Temple services

their faith.

> "They behold in the temple itself an acknowledged type or symbol of Messiah's human body; in the altar of burnt offerings a type, an illustration, an emblematic representation of His cross: in the perpetual fire, the wrath of God against sin: in the slain lamb, and the burning of it wholly on the altar, the atoning sacrifice of Christ: in the laying of the hands of the hands of the worshippers on the head of the victim to be offered, the imputation of guilt to Him who offered Himself a sacrifice as their substitute: in the incense, service offered acceptably: and the veil of Christ's flesh, in the veil which screened from their ocular vision the ark, the mercy-seat, and throne, and the radiance of the personal glory of the mediating Logos." (1.)

Psalms appropriate to these objects and to the accompanying rites were sung. Sometimes a single voice, representing the Holy One came from within the Temple. The singing was done by a semi-chorus of priests or Levites and the general chorus of all the worshippers, accompanied by the music of all the instruments. It is probable there was distribution of parts and antithesis of expression. Psalm 24 was sung as the threshold of the Temple was crossed. There followed the slaughtered lamb, the blood, the altar, the fire, and all the accompanying service.

The steps leading to the east gate of the Temple, at which the worshippers entered, were fifteen in number and thirty or more feet in length. A division of vocal and instrumental musicians is supposed to have been

(1.) Lord, op.cit., p.xiv f.

at the extreme right and extreme left of those steps. The king was near the top of the threshold, and the high priest, with a corps of singers, stationed in front of the lower step while the procession of worshippers passed up toward the gate. During this passage the Song of Degrees was sung. At its close the singers around the high priest took their stations near and around the altar, others remaining on the right and left sides of the outer sanctuary. (1.)

Preparation, Sacrifice, Thanksgiving

Waddy (2.) notes three liturgical elements in a Psalm - preparation, sacrifice, thanksgiving.

The preparation is elaborately worked out. If translated literally, some Psalms will be found to give directions for a miniature processional to be gone through before the altar of God is reached. This commemorates the pilgrim journey to Jerusalem, illustrated by the Songs of Ascents. In the procession the beliefs are worked into exultant conviction, through the infection of feeling produced within the group of worshippers. The last step in the preparation is the propounding of the vision, a theme, or topic.

The sacrifice may be thought of as four sacrificial actions. First comes purification, to be

(1.) Lord, op. cit.

accompanied by a phrase or ode which enforces the outward action by emphasizing its spiritual significance.

There follows the prostration at the threshold, again accompanied by symbolical words to indicate man's humble access with a summons-cry to God to "arise" and uplift him.

The final preparation before the moment of the sacrifice constitutes the third ritualistic action.

Then comes the Great Moment - the sacrifice. Selah indicates the great shout of summons, the call to God to hear and come. The fire, the symbol of God's presence is the signal for the shout of rejoicing.

The third element, thanksgiving, comes just after the sacrifice. It is the praise song, perhaps a short praise cry, a sentence, an ode, a litany, refrains. The climax of thanksgiving is in the Halleluia chorus.

There are evidences in the Psalter of such a progression of ritual. Psalm 84 is a processional liturgy for a festival and illustrates the giving of directions for the route of the processional. The procession itself, the growing convictions, are indicated in Psalms 84 and 117, also Psalm 118:24-26. Purification is designated in Psalm 26:2-6.

Prostration at the threshold is indicated in Psalm 99:5 -

> Exalt ye Jehovah our God,
> And worship at his footstool:
> Holy is he.

Psalm 22 is indicative of the final preparation for the sacrifice by humble acknowledgment of human weakness.

The sacrifice itself and the appearance of the symbolic fire is mentioned in Psalm 118:27 -

> Jehovah is God, and he hath given
> us light:
> Bind the sacrifice with cords,
> even unto the horns of the altar.

There are many examples of the praise song following the moment of sacrifice, e.g. Psalm 22:27-31, and Psalm 66:4,5,8. (1.)

The sacred seasons of the Hebrew year

An investigation of the actual liturgical settings of the Psalms will necessarily involve a survey of the sacred seasons of the Hebrew year to which the Psalms in question were allocated. Two festivals are of prime importance.

The seventh month was regarded as being especially important. At this time the first of these festivals took place - the Feast of Ingathering, the New Year Festival. There is evidence that such a festival, celebrating Yahweh's accession to the throne was observed at the beginning of each year, with considerable solemnity. As King, Creator and Judge, Yahweh was acclaimed and hailed by the faithful worshippers. Prominence was given to agricultural features. A kind of liturgical drama

(1.) Waddy, Homes of the Psalms

formed part of the ceremonies, symbolical of God's ascent to the throne. There were probably several liturgical processions in which the Temple, the altar, and the holy city were solemnly encompassed. The idea of accession included the implication that Yahweh had reduced to subjection the nations outside of Israel Now he was coming as a beautiful and gracious king.

As well as signifying the commencement of a new year,Rosh Ha'shanah celebrated the completion of the past year, with gratitude for the safe ingathering of the harvest.

For the new King a new song is required -

> Oh sing unto Jehovah a new
> song:
> Sing unto Jehovah, all the earth. Ps.96:1

Jehovah has ascended the throne -

> God is gone up with a shout,
> Jehovah with the sound of a
> trumpet. Ps.47:5

Psalms 65, 67, 85 and 126 relate to the agricultural aspect of the festival, since they express gratitude for the blessings of the harvest.

The second of the great festivals took place at the time of the winter solstice - the festival Hanukkah. This is the Autumn Feast of Ingathering, or Asiph. The thought emphasized is deliverance from calamity. Psalm 30 is particularly fitted for use at Hannukkah (1.)

(1.) Keet, A liturgical study of the Psalter

Thirtle (1.) notes two festivals to which Psalms would accrue - the Passover, with the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and Tabernacles, with the Feast of Ingathering. He explains "Shoshannim" and "Gittith" as being terms belonging to nature and agriculture. The first means lilies, flowers, therefore appertaining to the spring festival. The second means wine-press, fruit, of the autumn festival.

The Passover Feast, celebrated on the fourteenth day of the first month, was called Abib-ear-forming, or growing green. Around this day would cluster the Shoshannim Psalms, e.g. Psalms 44 and 48. (It must be noted that Thirtle attributes the titles of Psalms to the preceding Psalm.)

The wine-press was a figure of speech for harvest joy, and also a symbol of divine judgment. It is, then, particularly fitted for use at the Feast of Tabernacles. The Psalms so designated include 7, 80, and 83.

The Psalms are seen to be significant in the ritual and liturgy of the people of Israel.

> "One cannot easily overestimate the importance of temple worship for Judaism. The temple stood in the centre of its national and its religious life. The Jews believed that Yahweh dwelt in the innermost part, the holy of holies; here

(1.) Thirtle, The titles of the Psalms

was His home and His throne. The worshippers entered, therefore, literally the presence of God when they went into the temple. There they prayed to Him and thither they turned their faces in their devotions when they were away from it." (1.)

(1.) Bewer, The literature of the Old Testament in Its historical development, p.347

CHAPTER V

THE INHERENT SONG AND POETIC STRUCTURE OF THE PSALMS

Historical background of Psalm poetry

Hebrew poetry reaches back to the most ancient recollections of the people of Israel. By poetry we mean not a conscious art form, embodying laws of rhythm and rhyme, but the more primitive expression which in its inherent form may be called poetry. Wordsworth has said, "For all good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings." (1.) This is as true of folk poetry as it is of the work of an individual. The poetical expressions previous to and including the Psalter are to be classed as folk poetry, since they grow out of the life of the people and must be ascribed to them, rather than to single poets.

A comparison of early Psalms with the hymns of ancient Egypt, Assyria and Babylonia reveals the fact that the poetic scheme is strikingly similar in all these. There are stock phrases carrying over from the older literature, with alterations to suit the new conditions. It may be called a similarity "not of borrowing, but of ancestral relationship." (2.)

Any idea gathers strength when it is strongly expressed, and Hebrew poetry well represents the spontaneous utterances of the people of Israel. Lyric poetry is the most ancient kind of poetry, lyric in the sense of coming

(1.) William Wordsworth - Preface to 'Lyrical Ballads' Century Readings in English Literature, p.513

(2.) Peters, The Psalms as liturgies, p.26

directly from the heart, the emotions of the poet. Religious lyric poetry may be defined as the expression of feelings and emotions that have been stirred with the thought of God, and are thus directed God-wards.

> "Poetry and religion go together. In moments of religious experience when the soul is at one with the eternal harmony of God its utterances often become rhythmic and burst into song; common prose is not adequate to express its joy or its longing; in rhythmic rise and cadence flow forth praise and prayer revealing the deepest feelings and desires." (1.)

The Hebrew people turned to song as the natural outlet for their emotions on occasions of private and public worship and at times or rejoicing, mourning, celebrations in national life, and the like. Underlying the song is its poetical structure.

Parallelism in the Psalms

A considerable part of the value of the Psalms as poetry lies beyond reach, since inevitably the beauty and charm of verse loses much in translation. The exact system of versification is obscure, although it is reasonably certain that some such principle existed.

> "The Psalms were undoubtedly written, in the original Hebrew, according to a system of versification, and perhaps to some extent with forms of rhyme." (2.)

(1.) Bewer, The literature of the Old Testament, p.340

(2.) Van Dyke, Poetry in the Psalms, p.10

The Psalms in translation forfeit also the suggestiveness of language which is richest only in the original medium. It is impossible to carry over into another language the wealth of association which clusters around words and phrases.

The one valuable element of poetic form which is retained in the translation of the Psalms is, in point of fact, the outstanding characteristic of the Psalm poetry - parallelism, balancing, "thought rhyme." (1.) This relationship is demonstrated in various ways; it may be synonymous -

> When Israel went forth out of Egypt,
> The house of Jacob from a people of
> strange language; Ps.114:1

antithetical -

> For his anger is but for a moment;
> His favor is for a life-time:
> Weeping may tarry for the night,
> But joy cometh in the morning. Ps.30:5

synthetic -

> The law of Jehovah is perfect,
> restoring the soul:
> The testimony of Jehovah is sure,
> Making wise the simple.
> The precepts of Jehovah are right,
> rejoicing the heart:
> The commandment of Jehovah is pure,
> enlightening the eyes.
> The fear of Jehovah is clean, en-
> during for ever:
> The ordinances of Jehovah are true,
> and righteous altogether.
> More to be desired are they than gold,
> yea, than much fine gold;
> Sweeter also than honey and the drop-
> pings of the honeycomb. Ps.19:7-10

(1.) Van Dyke, Poetry in the Psalms, p.14

introverted -

> I cried unto thee, O Jehovah;
> And unto Jehovah I made supplication:
> What profit is there in my blood,
> when I go down to the pit?
> Shall the dust praise thee? shall
> it declare thy truth?
> Hear, O Jehovah, and have mercy upon
> me:
> Jehovah, be thou my helper. Ps.30:8-10

or climactic -

> I will lift up mine eyes unto the
> mountains,
> From whence shall my help come?
> My help cometho from Jehovah,
> Who made heaven and earth.
> He will not suffer thy foot to be moved:
> He that keepeth thee will not slumber.
> Behold, he that keepeth Israel
> Will neither slumber nor sleep. Ps.121:1-4 (1.)

Bewer (2.) classifies the expressions of parallelism on a numerical basis, as follows:

The distich or couplet, which is the simplest form and the component of longer forms. The sense in which parallelism is found may be synonymous -

> Thou has given him his heart's
> desire,
> And has not withholden the re-
> quest of his lips. Ps.21:2

where the same thought is expressed in two ways.

It may be tautological -

> Jehovah, how long shall the
> wicked,

(1.) Abingdon Commentary. Introduction to section on Psalms. p.509-515. Dr. E. A. Leslie

(2.) Bewer, The literature of the Old Testament, p.340-394

How long shall the wicked tri-
umph? Ps.94:3

where the same thought is expressed in almost the same words.

It may be antithetical -

For his anger is but for a moment;
His favor is for a life-time:
Weeping may tarry for the night,
But joy cometh in the morning. Ps.30:5

It may be synthetical -

I cry unto Jehovah with my voice,
And he answereth me out of his
holy hill. Ps.3:4

where the second thought complements the first.

Then there is, more rarely, the tristich, or triplet.

The floods have lifted up, O
Jehovah,
The floods have lifted up their voice;
The floods lift up their waves.

The tetrastich is a combination of distichs.

I am weary with my groaning;
Every night make I my bed to
swim;
I water my couch with my tears.
Mine eye wasteth away because
of grief;
It waxeth old because of all mine
adversaries. Ps.6: 6,7

The hexastich may be built up of distichs or tristichs.

Jehovah reigneth; let the peo-
ples tremble:
He sitteth above the cherubim;
let the earth be moved.
Jehovah is great in Zion;
And he is high above all the
peoples.
Let them praise thy great and
terrible name:
Holy is he. Ps.99:1-3

Alphabetic arrangements

Another device, that of alphabetic arrangements, is not so effective as the use of parallelism. The barrenness of theme is apt to overbalance the comparative wealth in treatment.

> "These alphabetic psalms are characterized by poverty of action and richness of expression." (1.)

Examples of this type are found in Psalms 25 and 37, where the first letters of the verses progress through the alphabet, and Psalm 119, where each verse in a strophe begins with one letter and the verses in the succeeding strophes begin with the next letter. (2.)

Metaphorical use of language

A characteristic of all Hebrew poetry, the metaphorical use of language, is particularly conspicuous in the Psalms. Two such passages occur in Psalm 56 -

> Be merciful unto me, O God, for
> man panteth for my life: Ps.56:1a

This image is drawn from the chase. The psalmist pictures his enemies as pursuing him as the hounds pursue the game, with open jaws, ready to seize its prey.

> Thou notest my wanderings;
> Put thou my tears into thy bottle:

The psalmist here is perhaps referring to the use of bottles

(1.) Van Dyke, Poetry in the Psalms, p.18

(2.) Bewer, The literature of the Old Testament

to hold the tears of the mourners. Such earthen or glass vessels have been found in the sepulchres of the ancient, and have been given the name of "lachrymatories."

Abundant use is made of the figurative power of language. (1.)

Relation of poetry and music

It is impossible to separate the development of poetry and music among the people of Israel. The two grew simultaneously, for the Psalm poetry was not for recitation, but for a type of singing considerably like chanting, rather than melodic song. The music constituted the rhythm almost more than the words, for the same tune could be used with Psalms of different metres.

> "The development of music among the Israelites was coincident with that of poetry, the two being equally ancient, since every poem was also sung." (2.)

Psalm titles which have poetic significance

Certain titles in the Psalter are thought to refer specifically to the poetic form in which those Psalms are cast.

The term Michtam, found in the titles of six Psalms, is usually considered a musical heading, but it has

(1.) Bulfinch, Hebrew lyrical poetry, p.22 f.

(2.) Jewish Encyclopaedia, Vol.IX p.118

been explained as the designation for a poem of epigrammatic character, an inscription.

The word Shir or Song is the general term for a canticle, and applies to both secular and sacred songs. It appears thirty times in the titles of the Psalms, and is usually preceded or followed by Mizmor, a technical term meaning "to make melody" and applicable especially to instrumental music as distinguished from vocal.

Shiggaion means literally "to wander." It very probably denotes a particular style of poetry or music or both. Kirkpatrick explains it as "a dithyrambic poem in wild ecstatic wandering rhythms, with corresponding music." (1.)

(1.) Kirkpatrick, The Book of Psalms, p.xx

SUMMARY

Summary

This thesis has been an attempt to draw from the text of the Psalter evidences which point to the existence of a musical life in Israel.

We have dealt briefly with the historical background of the music of Israel, including the developments in instrumentation, singing and the general character of the music of Egypt, Assyria and Babylonia, and Phoenicia. It is shown that the Hebrews drew heavily from these sources.

Before proceeding to the Psalter itself, mention was made of the Biblical precedents in other books of the Old Testament as these indicate the importance of music in the life of the people. It is shown that music was an integral part of the secular as well as the sacred festivals, and that the Israelites turned to song and other musical expressions on occasions of joy, of mourning, when celebrating a victory, etc.

The first examination of the text of the Psalter is to discover the instruments mentioned therein. The standard orchestral divisions, Percussion, Wind and String are followed in the classification of the instruments found. They are discussed separately, with a description of each, its probable source, and the extent to which it was used by the Hebrews.

The character of the vocal music is the subject of the second chapter. The historical background of styles of singing previous to the time of the Chronicler is indicated. The musical revolution and David's Ordinances of Song are outlined. The arrangement of the Temple chorus, the divisions into choirs, and organization for participation in the Temple liturgy is suggested.

The titles of the Psalms are next carefully studied in the light of their musical significance. Indication is made as to what they may reveal regarding the music of Israel - the tunes for which they stand, the directions they contain as to the instruments to be used or the style of singing to be followed, and whether or not special choirs are designated. Other terms which occur in the body of the Psalms are analyzed as to their musical significance. The theory that the Psalm titles may have become misplaced in the composition of the Psalter, so that the titles refer to the previous Psalm, is discussed.

The place of the Psalms in ritual and liturgy is the next subject for consideration. The relation between private and public worship is shown, with indications as to the historical background of the use of Psalms. The Psalter as the hymnbook of the Jewish Temple is dis-

cussed. The outline of the ceremony of the daily sacrifice is given, with due consideration to the part Psalms play in that ritual. The distinctive characteristics of the Sabbath sacrifice are indicated. The ritual of the Temple, with its three elements of Preparation, Sacrifice, and Thanksgiving, is outlined. The sacred seasons of the Hebrew year, as they became focal points to which Psalms would accrue, are discussed.

Since the song and poetic structure of the Psalms is the skeleton for its musical rendition, the fifth chapter deals with that phase of the Psalter. The historical background of Psalm poetry is first discussed. Three devices paramount in the Psalms are indicated, parallelism, alphabetic arrangements, and the metaphorical use of language. The relation of poetry to music is suggested, and the Psalm titles which have poetic as well as musical significance are analyzed.

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